

Community Visioning Workshop Summary

Meeting Logistics

May 15, 2014 | 6:00 - 8:00 PM
St. Martins Episcopal Church (Gable Hall)

Attendees

A total of 30 individuals signed in at the workshop. Attendees included members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, members of the general public, and media as well as other stakeholders

Agenda

- Sign-in, Review Displays, & Visioning Input Board
- Welcome + Introductory Presentation
- Questions/Answers
- Character Area Small Group Discussions
- Regroup + Recap + Survey Launch
- Adjourn

Summary

The Visioning Workshop was interactive in nature with several opportunities for the public to provide input throughout. The meeting began with an open house period that allowed the public to review displays and handouts that captured highlights from the existing conditions analysis. During this open house period, attendees were encouraged to provide input on what they believe are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Brookhaven as well as what they want Brookhaven to be known for 20 years from now. This open house portion was followed by a brief overview presentation of the comprehensive planning process, work to date, and meeting goals. A question and answer session followed prior to moving on to small group character area discussions. Prior to adjourning, key highlights from each discussion group were presented with final remarks from the planning team and City.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Activity

An uncensored list of written comments by citizens that provided input as part of the SWOT analysis follows:

Strengths

- Large natural tree canopy
 - Ditto - love the trees!!
- Great neighborhoods and smart people
- Great location - close to Buckhead but not Atlanta/Fulton Co
- Great location - highway access
- #1: Keep and protect the trees
- Brookhaven MARTA station
- Great neighborhoods
- Great people who care
- Natural community alignment
- Oglethorpe University!



Weaknesses

- City Government not transparent
- City government not responsive
- Trying to do too much, too fast without enough public input
- Not enough publicity for public processes
- More greenspace in District 4
- Selling Brookhaven for short term gain
- Zoning variances too easy
- Lowering standards to be business/builder friendly
- Lowering quality
- No vision of politicians
- No arts and culture
- Park and Recreation director doesn't seem to care
- Parks need care and funds
- Politicians 'ruling' vs 'governing' - listen to your constituents
- History of development with no plan

- Town Brookhaven clear cut and paved massive amounts of land. The Jabba the Hut of development

Opportunities

- Develop a livable, commercially attractive area with great restaurants and shopping and entertainment options
- Maintain and develop parks
- Maintain and develop pedestrian friendly/bike friendly areas
- Turn Buford Hwy into a SAFE walkable area with maintained properties. Take advantage of views of city skyline
- Have walkable neighborhood commercial for each neighborhood so people can walk to restaurants and shops instead of getting in cars. Small clusters of stores/shops even is better than nothing
- Promote/protect high quality of life neighborhoods
- Protect fabric of housing stock/character
- Walkable corridors
- Promote local merchants
- Encourage local employment
- Build a park at North Druid Hills and Gail Drive, NE. Right now it is an ugly empty lot.
- High quality model - national standard
- High goals, vision
- Strategically connect cut off neighborhood streets (cul-de-sacs) to make alternative walk/bike corridors off of main thoroughfares
- Need tough, enforceable zoning
- Town Center at Brookhaven MARTA station
- Number of swimming pools in city - now we need to spruce them up and create activities (neighborhood swim teams; summer league)

Threats

- Loss of tree canopy
- Damage to water table
- Over building
- Losing the human scale of the area
- Buford Hwy corridor is run-down, unattractive and unsafe. Should be a priority so not to negate other efforts
- Protection of natural drainage ways
- Protection of housing character - limit mechanisms; too great increase in home sizes.
- Overbuilding

- Excessive coverage [of lots]
- Loss of large lots of trees!
- Politically motivated redevelopment vs adhering to an iron-clad zoning plan
- We have limited commercial land. Don't fritter it away on small-scale projects or encourage assemblages.
- City government has their own agenda. Can't be trusted
- Developers who don't care about the trees and nature
- Not enough quality office space for small firms
- Traffic at Peachtree/North Druid Hills & Johnson Ferry/Ashford-Dunwoody
- Ignorance - short sighted priorities
- Ivy on trees negatively impacts the trees themselves, property, and just basic views of park space or of anything. Keep the trees alive!

In the Year 2034, People will Say that Brookhaven Is...

The public was also encouraged to give input on what people will say about Brookhaven in 2034. An *uncensored list of written comments by citizens that provided input to this activity follows:*



- Livable; high quality of life
- Diverse balanced population - economics/demographics
- Art & culture beacon!
- Dog-friendly
- Green
- Walkable
- Bicycle-friendly
- Responsive and transparent
- High vision, national standard model
- Mix of contemporary and historic
- Pedestrian scaled
- No single use, single story commercial buildings on Peachtree Road
- Sense of community
- Great neighborhoods
- Parking in the rear, buildings pulled up to the sidewalk
- Great walking and bike paths
- Trees along the street are beautiful
- Booming

- Pedestrian friendly
- Neighborhood feel; people on front porches and always talking
- Great community!
- Was smart to preserve trees
- Vibrant
- New and fresh
- Safe and able to walk alone
- Fantastic parks
- Crowded
- Too much traffic
- Green spaces!
- Bike/walk/running paths
- Live/work/play
- Connectivity
- Traffic control and relief

Welcome + Introductory Presentation

The formal portion of the workshop began with a welcome from the City of Brookhaven Assistant City Manager/Director of Community Development, Susan Canon. Consultant Team project manager Amanda Hatton from Jacobs Engineering provided a presentation of the existing conditions analysis which considered demographics, housing characteristics, economic factors, land use, community resources, and natural resources. A brief question and answer session and comments were offered:

Q. I think there is a need to balance the wishes of the owners with grand plans to develop property. Once the Comprehensive Plan goes into effect, how much will elected officials do to put teeth into it so that variance after variance won't be issued?

A: The Comprehensive Plan won't change any of the City's law. It captures the long term vision of the community. This forum is the pursuit of a consensus on what the vision should be. The plan will likely recommend adjustments to the City's zoning ordinance and development regulations as a tool to implement the vision; these changes would occur separately from the plan update and after adoption, as a part of implementation. The zoning ordinance is a tool to help implement the plan. Any changes to the zoning ordinance would require a public hearing process for the laws to be changed.

Q. Is there a special overlay associated with the Comp Plan? If we decide as a community what we want, there needs to be some structure to ensure that it would

be difficult for implementation of development other than what it included in the long term vision.

A. If the plan is adopted, there will be action items and an implementable work plan for the next five years, including zoning changes and land use recommendations. The implementation program is the nuts and bolts of taking the Comprehensive Plan to the next level. The planning team's goals is to develop an implementable, realistic work plan that the City plans to see through. We want it to be achievable.

Q. Regarding the community resources page, I think it is really missing a lot. We live here. One thing that we have in the area is a beautiful canopy of trees. Trees are taller than buildings. We need to preserve that. We already have some zoning in place that does not recognize our tree canopy. Once it is gone, you can't get it back. Natural resources need to be included in our vision.

A. Thank you for your comment. We will ensure that the tree canopy is documented. We have interviewed all of the elected officials and the tree canopy was discussed during those interviews. It is definitely on the radar screen.

Q. I was at another meeting where it was indicated that there are no parks in district 4 and that it is so densely developed that there is no room for a public park. That is not true. There are multiple areas that would be lovely for walking paths, etc.

A. Thanks for your comment. We have a Parks and Recreation Master Plan underway. We are aware of the deficiency in District 4. We know there is a need for park space in that area.

Q. In some communities, a certain percentage of property is required to be trees and/or green space. Do we have those types of regulations in Brookhaven?

A. The question is more regulatory based rather than planning based. We do have a zoning ordinance and a tree ordinance which covers lot coverage and the impervious surfaces allowed, which then results in how much is open space is required for each development. These ordinances also address the number of trees required for each development.

Character Area Small Group Discussions

Following the question and answer period, attendees were engaged in a workshop to help define character areas within the city. Attendees rotated among three different groups, each of which focused on a different set of character areas within the community. At each character area discussion table, attendees were given maps and a set of color-coded stars that corresponded to the following land uses:

- Red = Neighborhood Commercial
- Blue = Mixed Use
- Gold = Sacred Cows (places where there should be no change)
- Silver = Community Gateways
- Green = Public Space/Improvement

Attendees were asked to think about the future of Brookhaven and to place the stars on the maps where these land uses should go in the future.

Additional questions were asked at each character area discussion table including:

- Should area stay the same or change over time?
- Goals of each area?
- Unique policies or implementation tactics

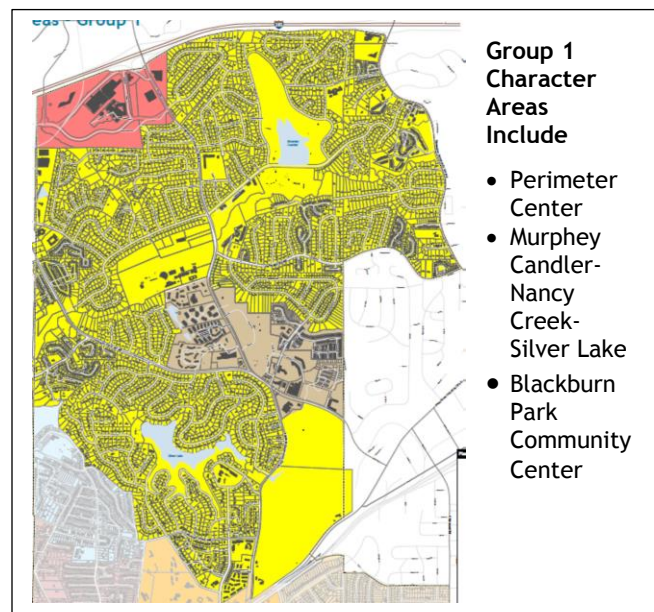
Input received during this activity is summarized below.

Group 1 Character Areas

Summary of Star Activity Input:

Perimeter Center

- Should have a trail connection along Ashford Dunwoody Road to the Connect 400 Trail.
- Gateways are seen as appropriate for Ashford Dunwoody Road and I-285.
- Mixed-use is seen as appropriate for Perimeter Center area adjacent to Ashford Dunwoody Road and adjacent to Perimeter Summit Parkway.
- Potential park space is seen as appropriate for the area south of Perimeter Summit Parkway.



- Neighborhood commercial is seen as appropriate for Lake Hearn area.

Murphey Candler-Nancy Creek-Silver Lake

- Expand trail network along Ashford Dunwoody Road from Blackburn Park to Peachtree Road and from Peachtree Road to Brookhaven MARTA.
- Gateways appropriate for Ashford Dunwoody Road and Johnson Ferry Road, Ashford Dunwoody Road and Perimeter Summit Parkway, Peachtree Road and Ashford Dunwoody Road, the city limits on Johnson Ferry Road, Mill Creek Road, Old Johnson Ferry Road, Harts Mill Road, East Nancy Creek Drive, Remington Road and Windsor Parkway.
- Neighborhood commercial is seen as appropriate for Windsor Parkway and Saybrook Drive and area adjacent to Lynwood Park.
- Mixed-use is seen as appropriate for Murphey Candler Park and Nancy Creek Way and Oak Forest Drive.
- Sacred cows include Murphey Candler Park, Marist School and Silver Lake.
- A potential park location has been identified for the Nancy Creek floodplain adjacent to Johnson Ferry Road. A potential trail should be added along Nancy Creek. Another park has been identified for Silver Lake and Ashford Dunwoody Road and the Brittany Club.

Blackburn Park Community Center

- Mixed-use is seen as appropriate for the Kroger shopping center, Durden Drive, and Donaldson Drive.
- Neighborhood commercial is seen as appropriate for Johnson Ferry Road and Blair Circle, Donaldson Drive and Johnson Ferry Road, seen as neighborhood commercial.
- Sacred cows include Blackburn Park.
- Potential Park location is identified for Johnson Ferry Road and Durden Drive.

Related Input for Group 1 Character Areas:

- Preserve parks/greenspace
- Bernwick is a good area for conservation, walking trails
- Brookhaven needs to coordinate development with neighboring government agencies - formalized structure
- 4 votes for Perimeter Center area to “stay as is”, but managed
- Other citizens do not know enough about the area to vote
- Blackburn Park:
 - Connect to Keswick
 - Greenspace is sacred cow
- Extension of paths to connect to one another
- Congestion is a concern in Perimeter Center

- Perimeter Center
 - Areas adjacent could change to retail/commercial
- Blackburn:
 - Just maintain the park
 - Improve parking
 - Redevelop Kroger to more mixed use
- Extend Nancy Creek Trail to adjacent neighborhoods
- Perimeter Center:
 - It could build out to high density commercial/hotel
 - Not going to be low rise
- Neighborhoods
 - Improve housing stock
 - Maintain current character, but make commercial areas more vibrant
- Blackburn
 - Fix traffic
 - Bring in some mixed use
 - Improvements to park
- What is happening to Brookhaven Park?

Group 2 Character Areas

Summary of Star Activity Input:

Lynwood Park

- Neighborhood commercial is ideal for the intersection of Windsor Parkway and Osborne Road, NE.

Osborne-Mabry

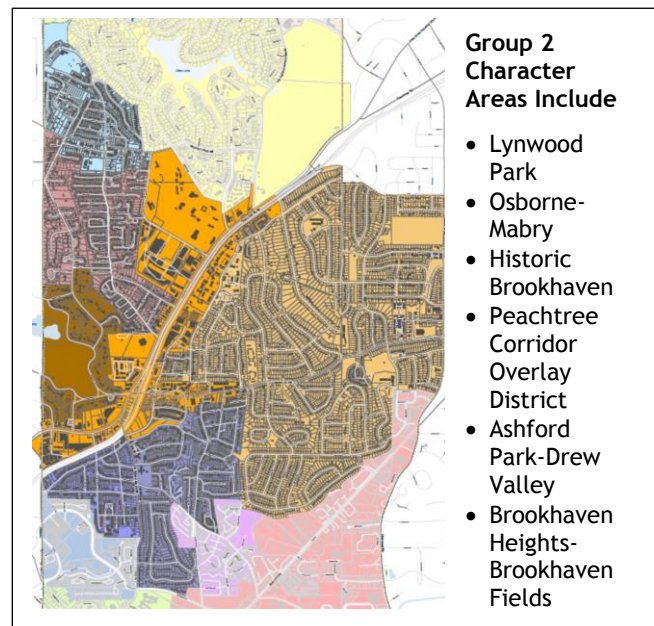
- Improve Brookhaven Park.
- Consider mixed use development at Peachtree and Kendrick Roads.

Historic Brookhaven

- Capital City Country Club is a sacred cow.
- A gateway should be preserved at East Brookhaven Drive.

Peachtree Corridor Overlay District

- Sacred cows are recognized at Oglethorpe University (including a standing of trees on campus), Brookhaven Park, and the Capital City Country Club.



- Neighborhood commercial should be considered on:
 - Dresden Drive at Peachtree Road and Caldwell Road, Peachtree Road at Colonial Drive, North Druid Hills Road, near Brookhaven Park, at the Town Brookhaven development, along Apple Valley Road and E. Osborne Road, and along Hermance Drive as it borders Oglethorpe University.
- Mixed use should be considered at:
 - The MARTA station; on Peachtree Road at Lanier Drive; on Peachtree Road between Kendrick and Osborne Roads; at the Town Brookhaven development as well as along Hermance Drive as it borders Oglethorpe University.
 - On Apple Valley Road between Dresden Road and Fernwood Park with higher density near the park.
 - On Peachtree Road at Brookhaven Plaza and Chestnut Plaza.
- The MARTA station is the most appropriate place for the highest density mixed use along Peachtree Road.
- Greenspace/public improvements should be incorporated into the MARTA station and at the Town Brookhaven development.
- Preserve and enhance park space at Parkside Park and Fernwood Park.
- Gateways are recommended on Peachtree Road as it enters the overlay district from the south; on Peachtree Road at North Druid Hills Road; at the MARTA station/Dresden Road; and as Peachtree Road enters the overlay district from the north at Lanier Drive.

Ashford Park-Drew Valley

- Gateway is appropriate for Dresden Drive at Clairmont Road.
- Neighborhood commercial is appropriate at Dresden Drive and Clairmont Road and Dresden Drive and Consauga Ave. NE, and along Dresden, moving west from Clairmont to Canton Place. It is also appropriate along Clairmont, just north of Manville Drive.
- Mixed use is appropriate for Thompson Road and Dresden Drive and at intersection of Manville Drive and Clairmont Road.
- There are several “FEMA” lots owned by DeKalb County and located in the Drew Valley Neighborhood. These are difficult to maintain but have great greenspace potential.
- Preserve and enhance greenspace at Ashford Park and Skyland Park.
- A park is appropriate for the old runway space along Clairmont Road, across from PDK airport.
- At the curve at along Drew Valley Road there is a detention pond that would be appropriate to convert to a park (similar to Historic Fourth Ward Park). It is popular currently with birders.
- The character of Dresden Drive, east of Consauga to just west of Consauga is appropriate should be preserved (sacred cow).

Brookhaven Heights-Brookhaven Fields

- No input received.

Related Input for Group 2 Character Areas:

- Mixed use is favorable to a certain degree, but people will oppose mixed use with 8 stories.
- There are two tiers in the overlay district, one is two story, and one is six stories. Eight story buildings would only be allowable with some other bonus or incentive provided by the developer.
- Downtown Greenville, SC is a great example of mixed use. It's walkable, has great shops, incorporates some institutional partners, has ample parking, etc.
- We need to define what Brookhaven should be - urban/suburban/pedestrian oriented?
- Huge current issue with Brookhaven Park. It is a key asset to the area, and the County is attempting to take control of 10 acres fronting Peachtree Road. This would limit access to the remaining acreage. We don't want the County to have control over the park.
- Higher density might be appropriate along Peachtree Road, but smaller scale development would be preferred along Dresden Drive. Would like more of a neighborhood feel.
- Town Brookhaven feels too big.
- We can't talk about increasing density without addressing the implications to transportation facilities. Developers would need to pay impact fees to ensure increased density comes with improved infrastructure.
- Skyland Park is currently 'under loved', but the opportunities it affords could be tremendous.
- Detention ponds have the ability to be attractive, with wildlife preserve opportunities. Birders currently go to the pond to watch for birds.
- Higher building heights might be appropriate along the rail line.
- Would like to see Apple Valley turned into a mini Krog Street.
- The abandoned Kroger need to go! That area might be appropriate for mixed use, but the neighborhoods that abut the property would need to be protected.
- Expand the footprint of the Capital City Country Club northward on the Draft Character Area Map.
- Name all unnamed creeks in the city.
- A roundabout makes sense for the intersection of Redding Road/Caldwell Road.

Group 3 Character Areas

Summary of Star Activity Input:

Lenox Park

- Neighborhood commercial is appropriate along North Druid Hills.
- Greenspace behind the corporate AT&T building and Residence Inn (between Lenox Park Boulevard and Lake Boulevard) is ideal for community greenspace.

Roxboro

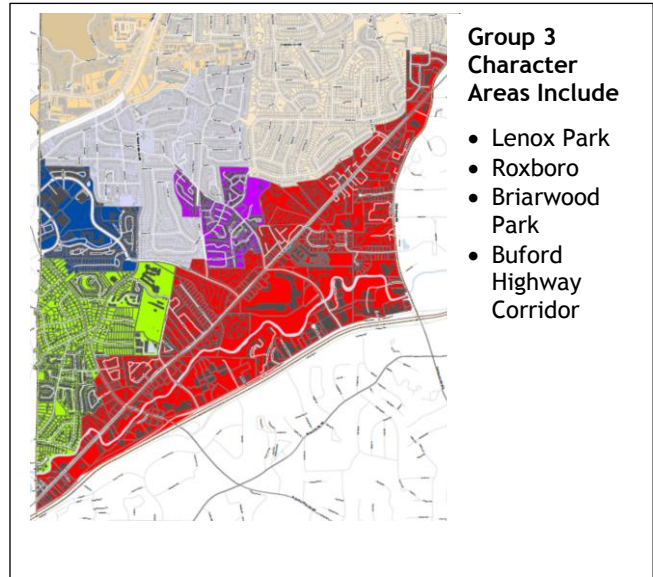
- Neighborhood commercial is appropriate along North Druid Hills between Wright Avenue and North Cliff Valley Way.
- Mixed use is appropriate on the border of Roxboro and unincorporated DeKalb County (at the city/county line).
- The wooded area between Cross Keys High and Woodward Elementary Schools may be a place that can be converted to greenspace for the community. It is approximately 10 acres owned by the DeKalb County School System. This area was also recognized as a sacred cow.
- Land to the east and west of E. Roxboro Road, NE between Goodwin Road and Wright Avenue, NE is noted for future greenspace.
- The triangular space at the E. Roxboro and North Druid Hills split is an ideal location for a gateway.

Briarwood Park

- Improvements are needed in Briarwood Park.
- Briarwood Park is considered a 'sacred cow' - should not be replaced but improved.
- Mixed use is appropriate on Briarwood Road, NE on the edge of Briarwood Park.

Buford Highway Corridor

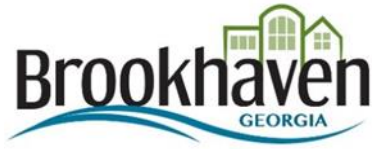
- Mixed use development is ideal for the stretch of Buford Highway from the area near Northeast Plaza (3307 Buford Highway), north to the Clairmont Road intersection.
- The intersections of Clairmont Road at Buford Highway and the southern border of Buford Highway at the City limit are good locations for gateways.



- Neighborhood commercial uses are ideal for the stretch of Buford Highway from the area near Buford Heights Apartments, north to the Clairmont Road intersection.
- Greenspace should be developed along the North Fork Peachtree Creek.
- Northeast Plaza (3307 Buford Highway) and properties directly across from the plaza on Buford Highway should be converted to a mixed use development.
- The land south of the City limit between I-85 and Briarcliff Road between Sheridan Road and Clairmont Road should be annexed into the City.
- Greenspace should be incorporated into the Northeast Plaza property.

Related Input for Group 3 Character Areas:

- Greenspace near Cross Keys should be noted as a resource.
- Possible to annex south of I-85?
- Assemblage north of gateway star (North Druid Hills) is opportunity to gain right of way.
- No sacred cows.
- Shopping center on Buford Hwy - should redevelop with trees.
- Commercial node supports surrounding community.
- Density south of Buford Hwy makes sense; keep traffic out of residential areas.
- Improve Buford corridor for office uses, business development; better quality.
- Buford Hwy needs more/better pedestrian facilities.
- Bike trail would be good.
- No room for a park in Brookhaven Heights.
- Beltline-like trail would be awesome.
- Greenway/trail connection (see map).
- Pocket parks in empty lots.
- Don't see a lot of value in gateway signage.
- Old library is being torn down - what can go here?
- Neighborhood commercial near Cross Keys?
- Are there environmental impact studies for new development? Concern that Town Brookhaven cleared the site of trees. Need more regulation.
- If a tree is a certain age, should be considered individually; need survey of tree resources (i.e., what happened on Kendrick Drive)
- North Peachtree Connectors is spearheading creek trail project.
- Wooded area north of Buford - walking park? Who owns property?
- Mixed use - dense only along Buford; less dense in other areas (like Dresden). Not near neighborhood entrances.
- Briarwood Park is under used. No one knows how improved it is; priority should be to make existing parks better, not build new.
- What is the status of school use agreement between Cross Keys and City of Brookhaven?



Regroup, Recap, & Adjourn

Following the Character Area Small Discussion Groups, the facilitators provided a recap of key findings from their respective groups to all attendees. Attendees were reminded to participate in the online community survey, the input from which will help inform the plan development and recommendations. The meeting concluded with next steps, ways for the public to stay involved, and a final thank you from Susan Canon.